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## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Health

### **2006 FLU SHOT CLINICS WILL START ON NOV. 6**

VICTORIA – Eligible British Columbians can get their annual flu shot through public health clinics and doctors' offices across B.C. starting Nov. 6, 2006.

The Province has ordered 1.233 million doses of influenza (flu) vaccine this year for the publicly funded flu vaccine program.

Eligible British Columbians will have access to a flu shot through the public health clinics before the peak of the influenza season in December. In addition to the vaccine, there are simple steps that people can use everyday to protect their and others' health from flu. These include washing hands frequently, coughing or sneezing into a tissue and throwing it in the garbage immediately, cleaning surfaces regularly and staying home when sick.

People eligible for the publicly funded flu vaccine include seniors, nursing home residents, people with chronic disease, very young children, health-care workers, emergency responders, and people who work with poultry or swine.

Information on flu clinic schedules is available through the public health departments of local health authorities starting in early October, or through BC NurseLine 24/7 by calling: Greater Vancouver (604) 215-4700, toll-free 1-866-215-4700, or for the deaf and hearing-impaired 1-866-889-4700.

Since new influenza viruses emerge each year, a vaccine must be produced annually to ensure it provides the best possible protection against the types of flu virus in circulation. The production of influenza vaccine is a unique and complex biological process, so annual differences in the manufacturing process can occur.

This year, flu vaccine manufacturers have reported problems growing one of the strains recommended for this season's flu shot, delaying the delivery of vaccine by about a month. If the Province receives any early shipments of vaccine, those doses will be provided to long-term residential care staff and residents to protect the residents, who are considered at very high-risk for severe illness or even death from influenza.

Flu public education materials, including hand washing posters, and more information on the flu vaccine can be found at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/influenza.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pho/influenza.html).

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